LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A spreader assembly comprising:

two spreader units, each spreader unit being for releasable attachment to at least one container;

a linking frame releasably connectable selectively either to both of the spreaders, or to a selected one of them, wherein the spreaders include respective headblock units, the linking frame releasably connectable to the spreaders via the headblock units.

2. (Original) A spreader assembly according to claim 1 in which the linking frame comprises a configuration mechanism which, while the linking frame is connected to both the spreader units, is operative to move the spreader units relative to each other.

3. (Original) A spreader assembly according to claim 2 in which the configuration mechanism includes one or more hydraulic cylinders having ends which are in fixed spartial relationship respectively to the two spreader units when the linking frame is connected to both the spreader units.

4. (Original) A spreader assembly according to claim 3 comprising at least three hydraulic cylinders, said hydraulic cylinders being independently controllable.

5. (Original) The spreader assembly according to claim 4 wherein the hydraulic cylinders are arranged in a common plane with two of said cylinders parallel and spanning between said spreader units and the third cylinder placed intermediate the parallel cylinders and inclined to an axis defined by the parallel cylinders.

6. (Currently Amended)   A spreader assembly according to ~~any of claims 2 to 5~~ claim 2 in which the configuration mechanism is operative to move the spreader units:

(i) to relatively move the spreader units while the longitudinal axes of the spreaders remain in a plane,

(ii) to relatively move the spreader units such that their axes do not lie in a single plane, and

~~(ii)~~ (iii) to relatively move the spreader units along their longitudinal axes[[,]].

7. (Original)   A spreader according to claim 6 in which the releasable connection between the linking frame and the spreader units is at or proximate end portions of said respective headblocks.

8. (Currently Amended)   A spreader assembly according to claim 1 ~~any preceding claim~~ in combination with a docking station which is in fixed positional relationship to a trolley from which the spreader assembly is suspended, the linking frame being lockable to the docking station.

9. (Original)   A combination of a trolley and a spreader assembly suspended from the trolley,

the spreader assembly comprising two spreader units, each spreader unit being for releasable attachment to at least one container, and a linking frame connected to both the spreaders and releasable from at least one of them; and

the trolley comprising a docking station, the linking frame being lockable to the docking station.

10. (Currently Amended)   A combination according to claim 9 ~~or claim 10~~ in which one or both of the linking frame and docking station includes one or more sockets while the other includes plugs which can be received into the sockets.

11. (Currently Amended) A combination according to claim 9 ~~or claim 10~~ in which a resilient buffer is provided to cushion impact between the or each socket and the respective plug.

12. (Original) A combination according to claim 10 in which one or both of the sockets and/or plugs are shaped with a guide profile, such that, when the sockets approach the plugs, contact between the sockets and plugs guides the spreader laterally into a predetermined position relative to the docking station.

13. (Currently Amended) A combination according to ~~any of claims 10 to 12~~ claim 10 in which one or more locking mechanisms are mounted on a first one of the linking frame and docking station, the or each locking mechanism being operative when the plugs are in the sockets to releasably engage with said plugs or sockets on the other one of the linking frame or docking station to lock the locking frame to the docking station.